

The Condition of College & Career Readiness 2019

North Carolina Key Findings

Performance of 2019 Graduates

- North Carolina students have been census testing with the ACT since 2012.
- In the 2019 North Carolina graduating class, 110,339 graduates (an estimated 100 percent) took the ACT test with a Composite score average of 19.0. This compares to 100,557 (an estimated 100 percent) with an average of 19.0 in 2015. Nationally, an estimated 52 percent of 2019 graduates took the ACT with an average Composite score of 20.7.
 - The 2019 North Carolina graduating class average English score was 17.8. This compares to 18.0 and 17.6 in 2018 and 2015, respectively.
 - The 2019 North Carolina graduating class average math score was 19.2. This compares to 19.3 and 19.5 in 2018 and 2015, respectively.
 - The 2019 North Carolina graduating class average reading score was 19.4. This compares to 19.5 and 19.2 in 2018 and 2015, respectively.
 - The 2019 North Carolina graduating class average science score was 19.0. This compares to 19.2 and 19.0 in 2018 and 2015, respectively.
- In 2019, 18 percent of North Carolina graduates met all four ACT College Readiness Benchmarks. This compares to 18 and 18 percent of 2018 and 2015 graduates, respectively.
 - In 2019, 49 percent of North Carolina graduates met zero ACT College Readiness Benchmarks. This compares to 47 and 46 percent of 2018 and 2015 graduates, respectively.
 - In 2019, 45 percent of North Carolina graduates met the ACT English College Readiness Benchmark. This compares to 46 and 47 percent of 2018 and 2015 graduates, respectively.
 - In 2019, 31 percent of North Carolina graduates met the ACT Math College Readiness Benchmark. This compares to 31 and 32 percent of 2018 and 2015 graduates, respectively.
 - In 2019, 34 percent of North Carolina graduates met the ACT Reading College Readiness Benchmark. This compares to 35 and 34 percent of 2018 and 2015 graduates, respectively.
 - In 2019, 26 percent of North Carolina graduates met the ACT Science College Readiness Benchmark. This compares to 25 and 26 percent of 2018 and 2015 graduates, respectively.
 - In 2019, 30,072 (27 percent) of North Carolina graduates met three or four ACT College Readiness Benchmarks. This compares to 30,184 and 27,880 (28 and 28 percent) out of 2018 and 2015 graduates, respectively. For reference, the national percentage of 2019 graduates meeting three or four benchmarks was 37 percent.

STEM

- In 2019, 19,569 North Carolina graduates (18 percent) indicated having an interest in STEM majors and/or careers.
- Compared to a 2019 North Carolina graduating class average ACT STEM score of 19.3, graduates in 2018 and 2015 had STEM averages of 19.5 and 19.5, respectively.
- Compared to 13 percent of 2019 North Carolina graduates meeting the ACT STEM College Readiness Benchmark, graduates in 2018 and 2015 had STEM Benchmark percentages of 13 and 13, respectively.
 - 42 percent of 2019 North Carolina graduates taking physics met the ACT Science College Readiness Benchmark, compared to 32 for students not taking physics.
 - 2019 North Carolina graduates meeting the ACT STEM College Readiness Benchmark had an average science score of 28.5. This compares to 28.0 in 2015.
 - 44 percent of 2019 graduates taking three or more years of math met the ACT Math College Readiness Benchmark, compared to 16 percent for students taking less than three years of math.
 - 2019 North Carolina graduates meeting the ACT STEM College Readiness Benchmark had an average math score of 28.6. This compares to 28.5 in 2015.

Career Readiness Indicator

- The ACT Composite scores associated with a 50% chance of earning each ACT WorkKeys NCRC level or higher are: 13 for Bronze, 17 for Silver, 22 for Gold, and 27 for Platinum. Based on those cut scores, students who earned an ACT Composite score of less than 13 would be classified as “Needs Improvement,” 13 to 16 as “Bronze,” 17 to 21 as “Silver,” and 22 or above as “Gold or Higher.”
 - In 2019, 36,048 graduates (33%) earned an NCRC. 9,101 were at a Bronze level, 10,194 were at a Silver level, 6,525 were at a Gold level, and 5,114 were at a Platinum level. The North Carolina accountability measure for college readiness is Silver or higher and 21,833 students (60%) met that standard.

Impact

- Based on the actual test volume and ACT score distributions of 2019 ACT-tested North Carolina high school graduates, ACT research estimates that an increase of 0.1 in state average ACT Composite score for the 2019 graduating class would result in:
 - 284 more students enrolling in college.
 - 311 more students persisting to year two.
 - 235 fewer students needing remedial English.
 - 355 fewer students needing remedial math.
 - 321 more students persisting to year four.
 - 334 more students earning a postsecondary degree within six years.

Behaviors that Impact Access and Opportunity

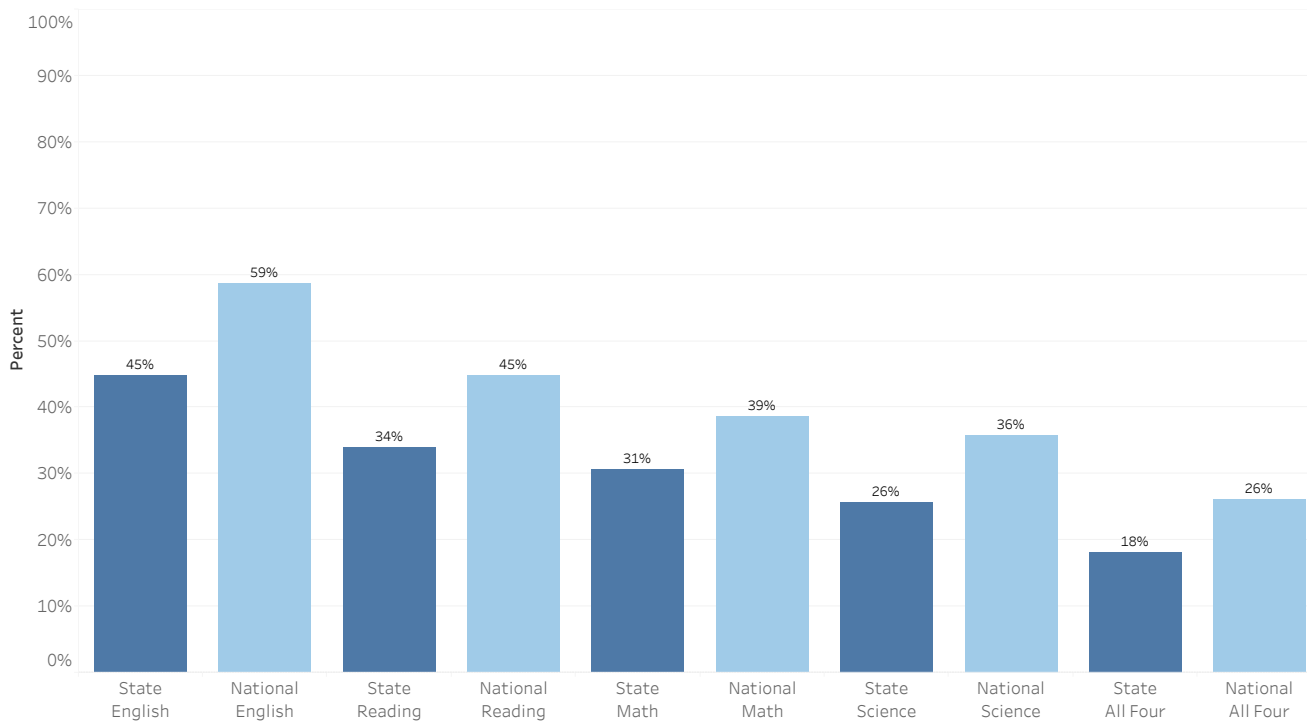
- In North Carolina, 21,091 of the 2019 graduates (19.1 percent) taking the ACT two or more times had an average Composite score of 22.8, compared to an average of 18.1 for 89,248 of the 2019 graduates (80.9 percent) who took the ACT only once.
 - Nationwide, 765,568 of the 2019 graduates (42.9 percent) taking the ACT two or more times had an average Composite score of 22.7, compared to an average of 19.2 for 1,017,252 of the 2019 graduates (57.1 percent) who took the ACT only once.
- 275,456 score reports were sent to colleges by 2019 North Carolina ACT-tested graduates.
 - 172,218 score reports were sent to in-state public colleges by 2019 North Carolina ACT-tested graduates.
 - For North Carolina's 2019 ACT-tested graduates, the top five schools to which scores were sent were North Carolina State University, East Carolina University, the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, Appalachian State University, and the University of North Carolina, Charlotte.
 - For North Carolina's 2019 ACT-tested graduates, the top three out-of-state schools to which scores were sent were Clemson University, the University of South Carolina - Columbia, and Liberty University.
- In the 2018-2019 academic year, ACT issued 8,522 ACT fee waivers to qualified North Carolina students across all grades. However, 2,676 students (31.4 percent) did not take advantage of this opportunity to test for free. This compares to 487,749 waivers issued nationally, of which 135,569 (27.8 percent) students did not take advantage. Fee waivers represent a great opportunity for students of low socioeconomic status to retest without incurring any fees.
 - While African American North Carolina students represent 48 percent of fee waivers issued, they account for 49 percent of unused fee waivers. This compares to 32 and 34 nationally.
 - While White North Carolina students represent 16 percent of fee waivers issued, they account for 15 percent of unused fee waivers. This compares to 19 and 17 nationally.
 - While Hispanic North Carolina students represent 23 percent of fee waivers issued, they account for 21 percent of unused fee waivers. This compares to 35 and 36 nationally.

Postsecondary Aspirations

- Aspirations matter. Students who aspire to a higher level of postsecondary education typically achieve higher ACT Composite scores.
 - 13,939 students (13 percent) aspired to attain a graduate or professional degree. They had an average Composite score of 23.6.
 - 15,714 students (14 percent) aspired to attain a bachelor's degree. They had an average Composite score of 19.9.
 - 2,329 students (2 percent) aspired to attain a vocational/technical or associate's degree. They had an average Composite score of 15.5.
- In the North Carolina graduating class of 2019, 6,634 students (6 percent) had parents who did not attend college.
- In order of prevalence, the five most commonly indicated college majors of interest for 2019 North Carolina graduates were: Undecided; Nursing, Registered (BS/RN); Medicine (Pre-Medicine); Business Administration and Management, General; and Biology, General.
 - In the North Carolina graduating class of 2019, 5,061 students (5 percent) indicated being undecided about their college major. They had an average Composite score of 21.5. Decision making regarding college major can be facilitated through activities included in ACT Aspire and PreACT testing experiences. In addition, the Student Score Report is a valuable tool for conversations using the College and Career Planning and Interest-Major Fit sections.
 - In the North Carolina graduating class of 2019, 1,206 (1 percent) indicated planning on majoring in education. They had an average Composite score of 19.7.

NORTH CAROLINA College and Career Readiness Attainment, Participation, and Opportunity

Percent of 2019 ACT-Tested High School Graduates Meeting ACT College Readiness Benchmarks* by Subject



Data From Graph Above

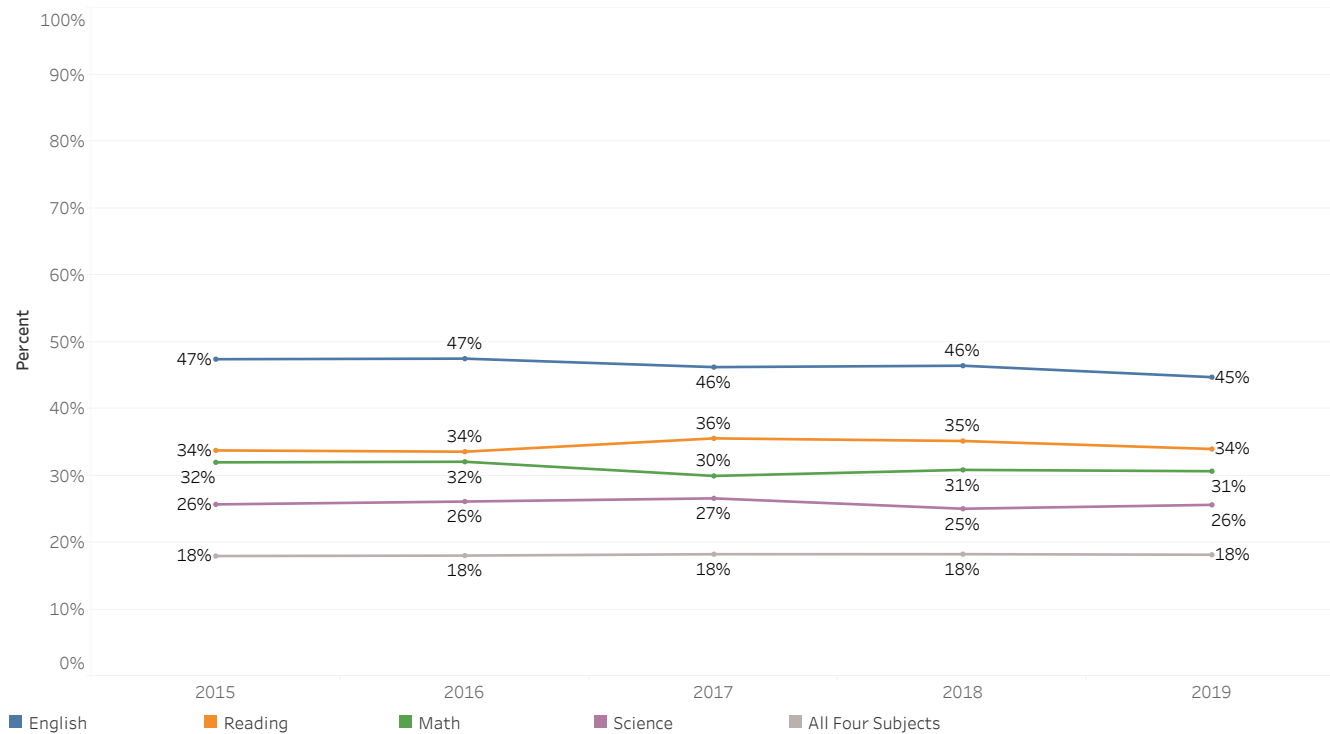
State English	National English	State Reading	National Reading	State Math	National Math	State Science	National Science	State All Four	National All Four
45%	59%	34%	45%	31%	39%	26%	36%	18%	26%

*The ACT College Readiness Benchmarks are scores on the ACT subject area tests that represent the level of achievement required for students to have a 50% chance of obtaining a B or higher or about a 75% chance of obtaining a C or higher in corresponding credit-bearing first-year college courses. Throughout this report, benchmark attainment corresponds with students meeting or exceeding 18 in English, 22 in Reading, 22 in Math and 23 in Science.

Note, missing data points in tables and graphs reflect insufficient data for reporting.

NORTH CAROLINA College and Career Readiness Attainment, Participation, and Opportunity

Percent of 2015–2019 ACT-Tested High School Graduates Meeting ACT College Readiness Benchmarks*



Data From Graph Above

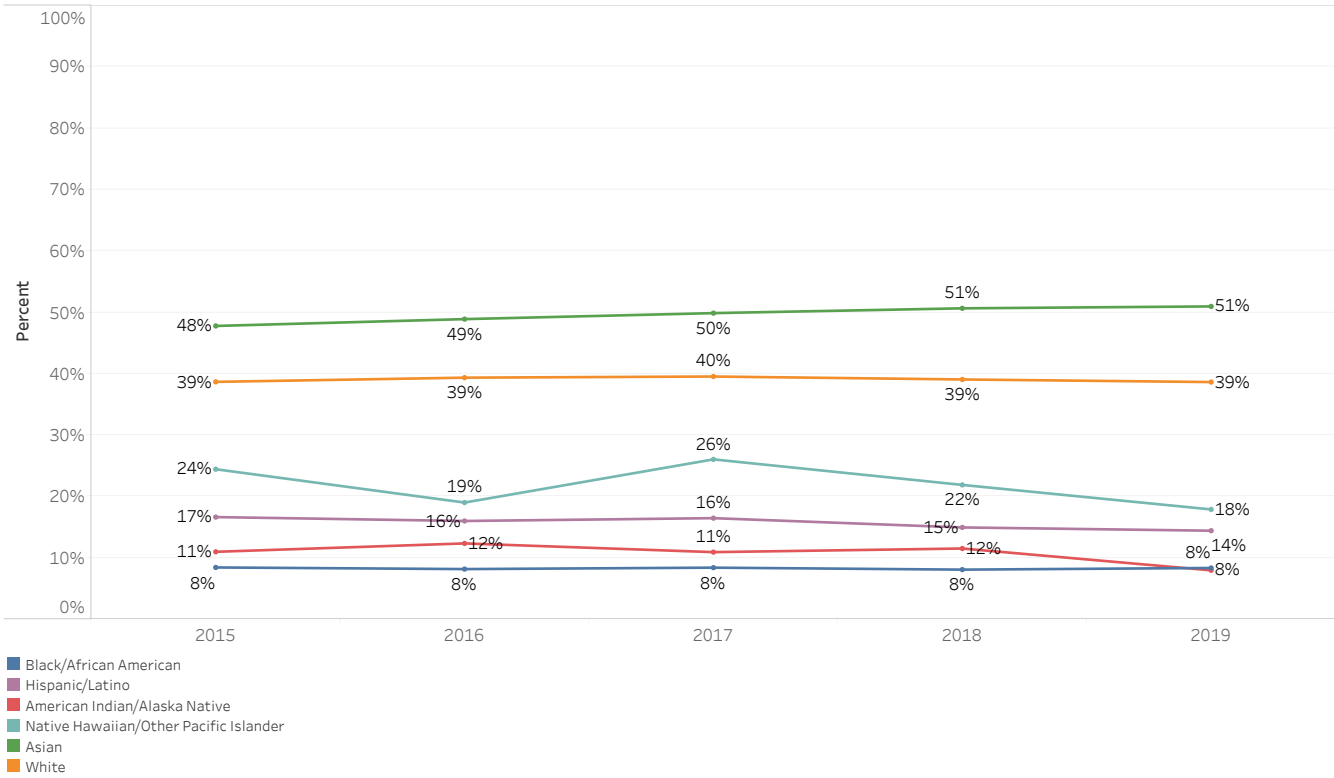
	English	Reading	Math	Science	All Four Subjects
2015	47%	34%	32%	26%	18%
2016	47%	34%	32%	26%	18%
2017	46%	36%	30%	27%	18%
2018	46%	35%	31%	25%	18%
2019	45%	34%	31%	26%	18%

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NORTH CAROLINA College and Career Readiness Attainment, Participation, and Opportunity

Percent of 2015-2019 ACT-Tested High School Graduates Meeting Three or More Benchmarks by Race/Ethnicity



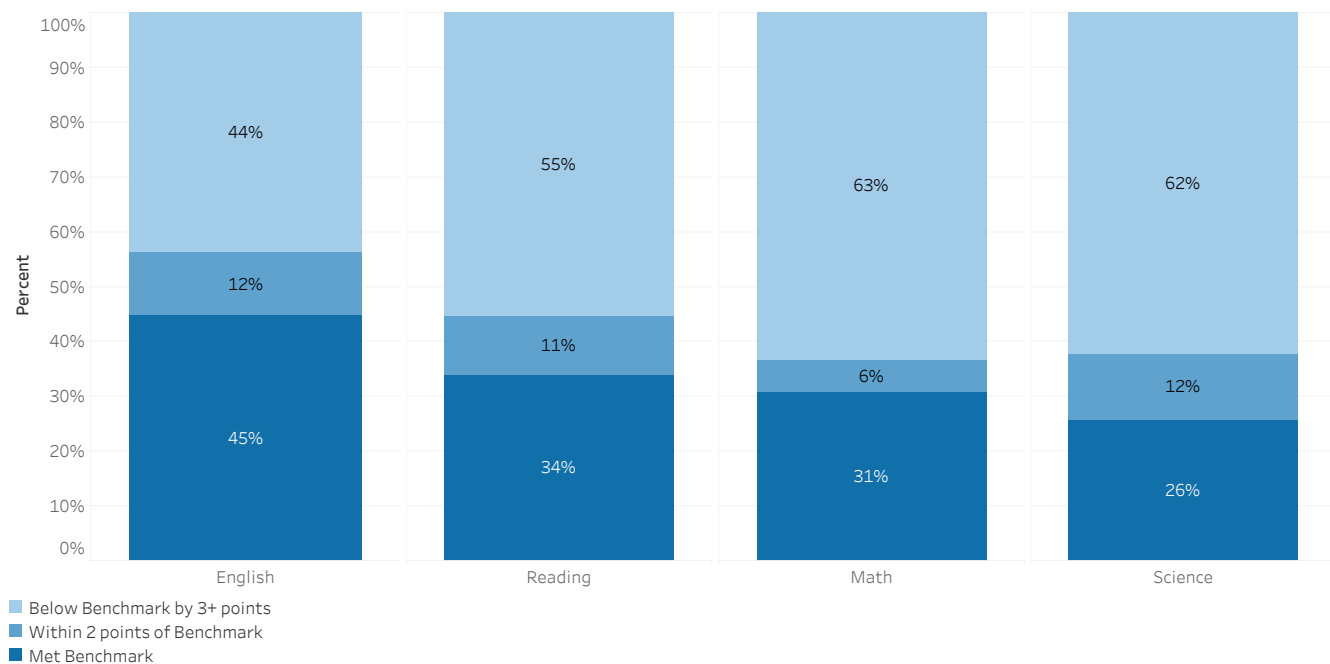
Data From Graph Above

	Black/African American	Hispanic/Latino	American Indian/Alaska Native	Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	Asian	White
2015	8%	17%	11%	24%	48%	39%
2016	8%	16%	12%	19%	49%	39%
2017	8%	16%	11%	26%	50%	40%
2018	8%	15%	12%	22%	51%	39%
2019	8%	14%	8%	18%	51%	39%

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NORTH CAROLINA College and Career Readiness Attainment, Participation, and Opportunity

Percent of 2019 ACT-Tested High School Graduates by ACT College Readiness Benchmark Attainment and Subject



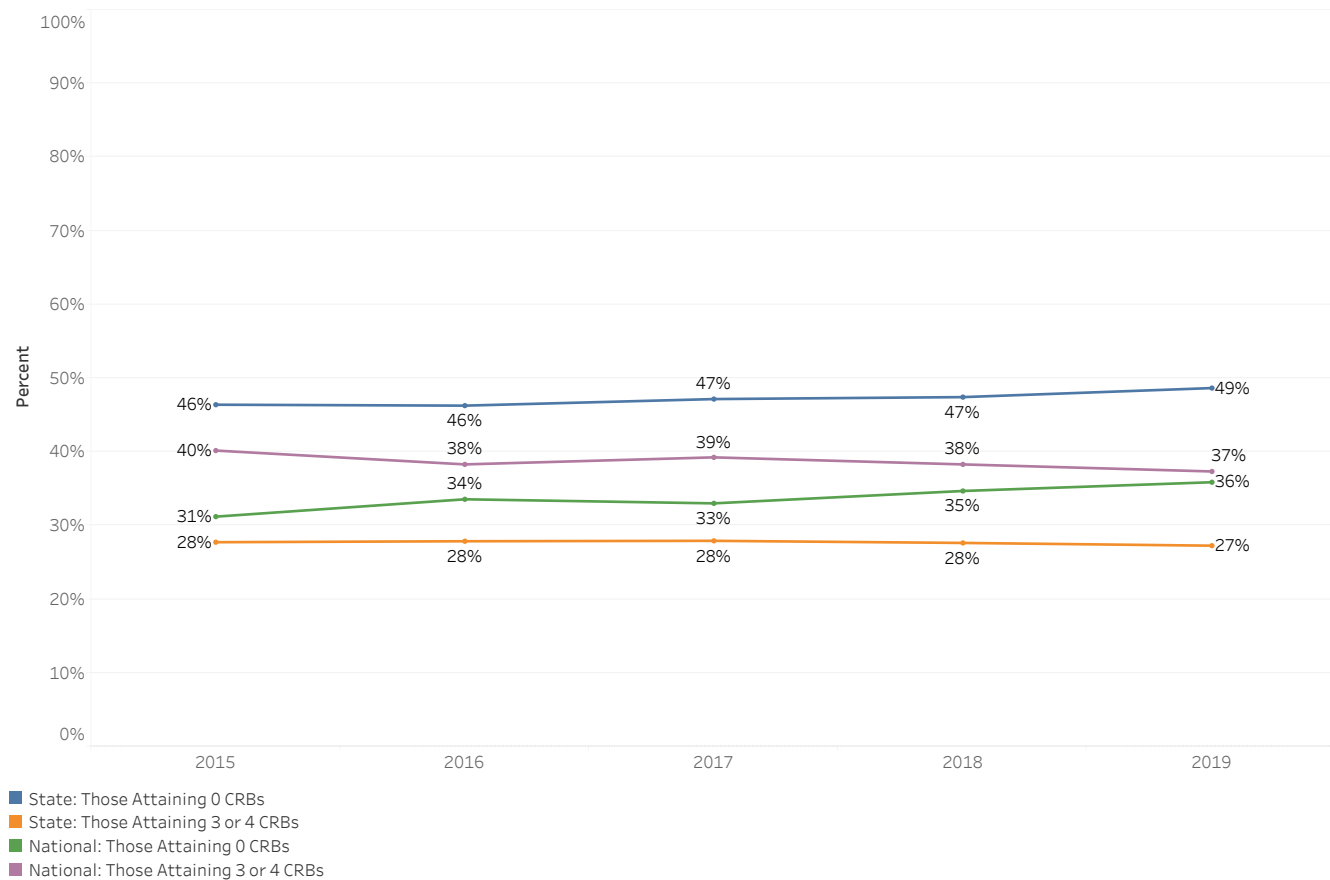
Data From Graph Above

	Below Benchmark by 3+ points	Within 2 points of Benchmark	Met Benchmark
English	44%	12%	45%
Math	63%	6%	31%
Reading	55%	11%	34%
Science	62%	12%	26%

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Percent of 2015–2019 ACT-Tested High School Graduates Meeting ACT College Readiness Benchmarks*



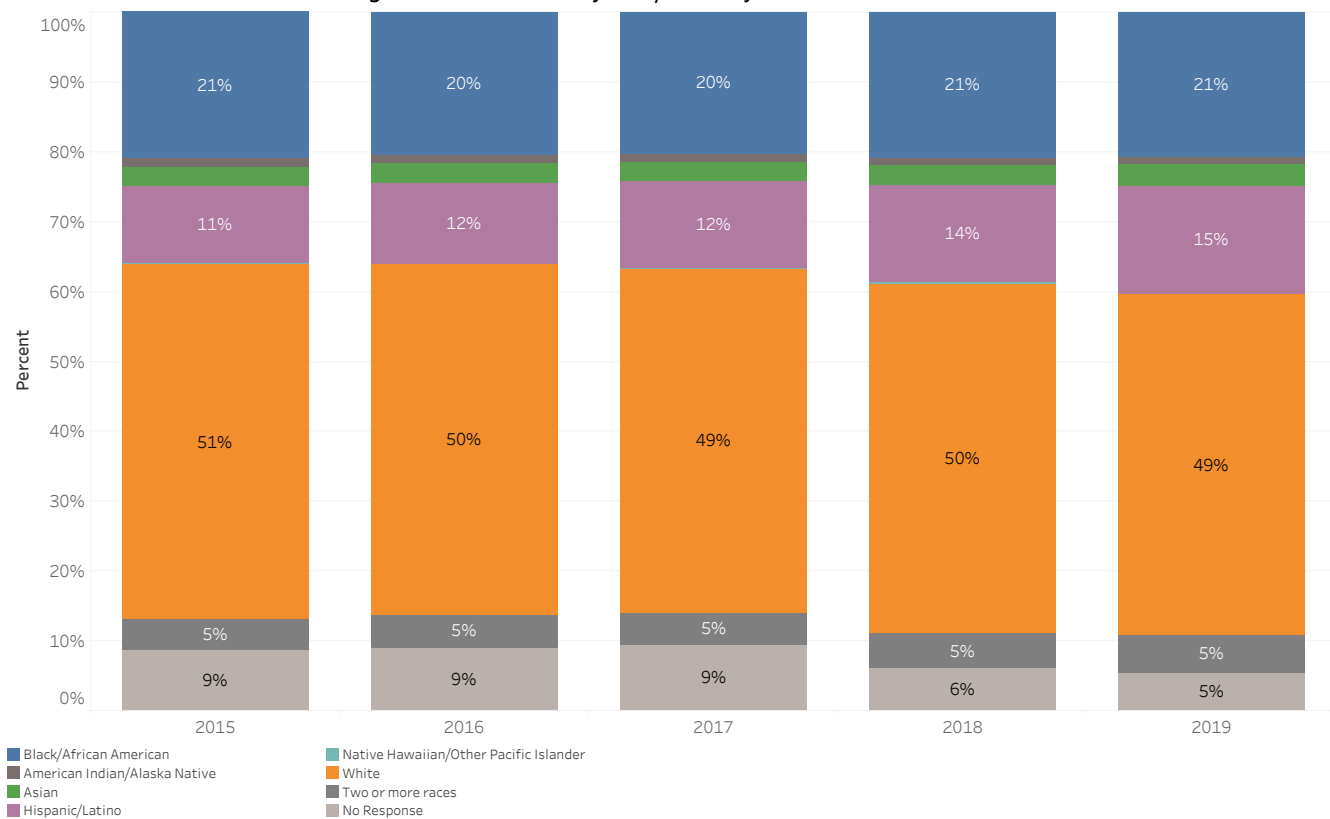
Data from Graph Above

	State: Those Attaining 0 CRBs	State: Those Attaining 3 or 4 CRBs	National: Those Attaining 0 CRBs	National: Those Attaining 3 or 4 CRBs
2015	46%	28%	31%	40%
2016	46%	28%	34%	38%
2017	47%	28%	33%	39%
2018	47%	28%	35%	38%
2019	49%	27%	36%	37%

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NORTH CAROLINA College and Career Readiness Attainment, Participation, and Opportunity

Percent of 2015-2019 ACT-Tested High School Graduates by Race/Ethnicity



Data From Graph Above

	Black/African American	American Indian/Alaska Native	Asian	Hispanic/Latino	Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	White	Two or more races	No Response
2015	21%	1%	3%	11%	0%	51%	5%	9%
2016	20%	1%	3%	12%	0%	50%	5%	9%
2017	20%	1%	3%	12%	0%	49%	5%	9%
2018	21%	1%	3%	14%	0%	50%	5%	6%
2019	21%	1%	3%	15%	0%	49%	5%	5%

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NORTH CAROLINA College and Career Readiness Attainment, Participation, and Opportunity

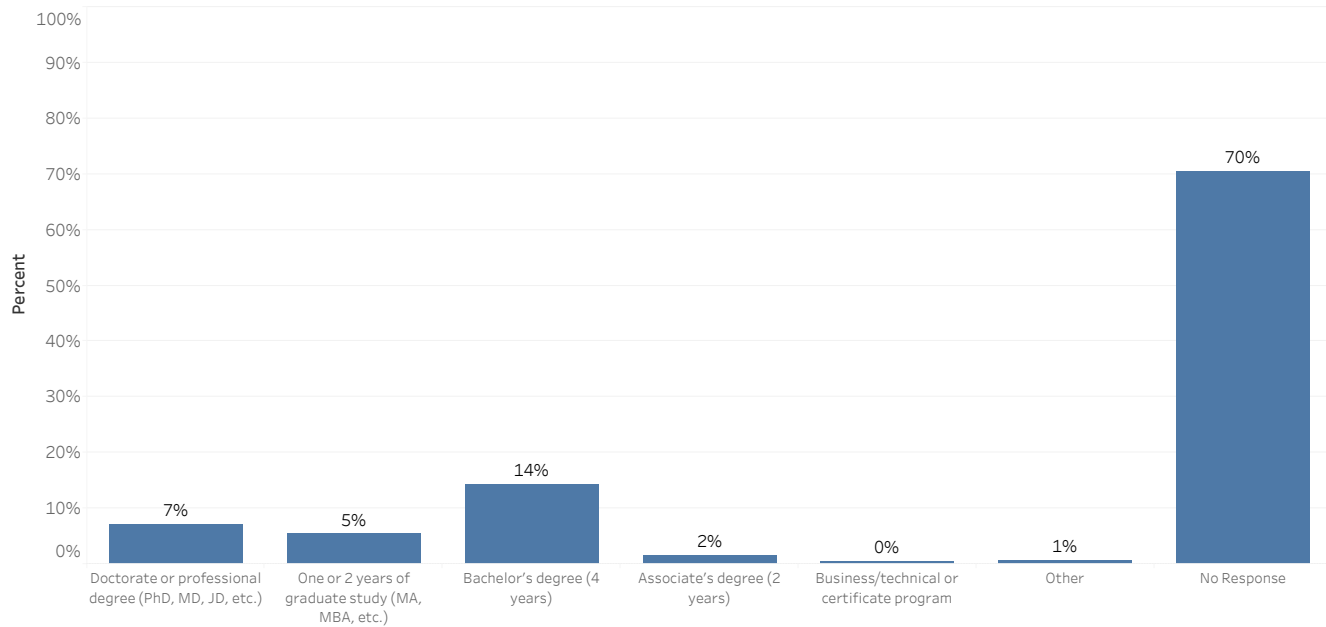
Student Data Trends: 2015-2019, State vs. Nation

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
State N-count	100,557	103,902	106,210	109,256	110,339
National N-count	1,924,436	2,090,342	2,030,038	1,914,817	1,782,820
Average ACT English Score - State	17.6	17.8	17.8	18.0	17.8
Average ACT English Score - National	20.4	20.1	20.3	20.2	20.1
Average ACT Reading Score - State	19.2	19.5	19.6	19.5	19.4
Average ACT Reading Score - National	21.4	21.3	21.4	21.3	21.2
Average ACT Math Score - State	19.5	19.4	19.3	19.3	19.2
Average ACT Math Score - National	20.8	20.6	20.7	20.5	20.4
Average ACT Science Score - State	19.0	19.2	19.3	19.2	19.0
Average ACT Science Score - National	20.9	20.8	21.0	20.7	20.6
Average ACT Composite Score - State	19.0	19.1	19.1	19.1	19.0
Average ACT Composite Score - National	21.0	20.8	21.0	20.8	20.7

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NORTH CAROLINA College and Career Readiness Attainment, Participation, and Opportunity

Percent of 2019 ACT-Tested High School Graduates by Educational Aspirations



Data From Graph Above

	% of Graduates
Doctorate or professional degree (PhD, MD, JD, etc.)	7%
One or 2 years of graduate study (MA, MBA, etc.)	5%
Bachelor's degree (4 years)	14%
Associate's degree (2 years)	2%
Business/technical or certificate program	0%
Other	1%
No Response	70%

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